ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY

Introduction
Kakamega County has a youthful population with people below age 15 making up about half (47%) of the total population (Figure 1). This is mainly because many more children are added to the population than people dying.

This youthful population has implications on the County’s health and development agenda as it puts increasing demands on provision of services including health and education. One of the main areas of concern in Kenya is the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of adolescents and the extent to which adolescents’ SRH needs are met. One in four (25%) people in Kakamega County is an adolescent.

Teen pregnancy
• About one in five (19%) of girls aged 15-19 years in Kakamega County have begun childbearing; about the same as the national level (Figure 2). Specifically, 6% are pregnant with their first child and 13.5% have ever given birth compared to 3.4% and 14.7% respectively, at the national level.
• Kakamega County’s age specific fertility rate for girls aged 15-19 (adolescent birth rate) is 101 births per 1000 girls which is higher than the national level (96).

Contraceptive use among adolescents
• Teenage pregnancies often result from low use of contraceptives and/or unmet need for contraceptives. In Kenya, 37% of currently married adolescents use modern contraceptives and about a quarter (23%) have an unmet need for contraceptives. This means that they would like to avoid pregnancy but are not using a modern contraceptive method.
• Contraceptive use is often measured using currently married women as the unit of analysis. However, it appears that in Kakamega County, marriage among girls aged 15-19 years is negligible or does not occur and therefore we are unable to indicate contraceptive use and unmet need for this age group. Furthermore, the sample size of sexually active girls aged 15-19 was too small to get a reliable estimate of contraceptive use.
• Among currently married young women aged 20-24 in Kakamega County, 63% use a modern contraceptive method (Figure 3). Whereas, 40% have an unmet need for contraceptives. The unmet need in this age group is two times that of the same age group at the national level.
HIV prevalence and prevention among adolescents

- County level HIV data are not yet available. At regional level, 1.6% of youth aged 15-24 in the former Western province, where Kakamega County is located, have HIV. This is lower than the national rate but higher than in some regions where the rates are 1% or lower (Central and Eastern provinces) (Figure 4).
- One of the most effective ways of preventing Sexually Transmitted infections and HIV is through correct and consistent use of condoms during sex.
- In Western region, where Kakamega County is located, a significant proportion of young people engage in risky sex. In 2014, similar to the national trend, 62% of never married women used a condom during their last sexual encounter. Whereas, 70% of never married men used a condom during their last sexual encounter.
- This means that between 30 and 40% of young people in the region did not use a condom during their last sexual encounter.

Other important indicators

Education outcomes

- Education is an important determinant for sexual and reproductive health particularly among girls. Girls who complete secondary and higher education have better sexual and reproductive health outcomes – they are less likely to have unwanted pregnancies and more likely to have higher socio-economic status.
- Kakamega County is doing well on primary school enrollment. Nearly all (96%) children in the official primary school-age are enrolled in primary school (Net enrollment rate).
- However, only about half (52%) of children in the official secondary school-age are enrolled in secondary school.
- At national level, 88% of children in the official primary school-age are enrolled in primary school and less than half (47%) of children in the official secondary school-age are enrolled in secondary school (Figure 5).

Female circumcision among adolescents

- Female circumcision, commonly referred to as Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting is linked to obstetric complications and gynecological problems and long-term negative effects on women’s wellbeing. It is also often linked to girl child marriage which also has long-term negative effects on women’s health and wellbeing.
- Kakamega County is one of the Counties in Kenya where female circumcision is not practiced.

References